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the beams beforementioned, a row of stakes from three to six feet long, according to the depth, are placed perpendicularly close to each other, whose ends rest on the clay underneath, but the upper end of almost the whole of them, bear evident marks of being burned: that part of them however whose tops are higher than the lying beams (and likely the whole of them were that high before they were burned) have each a mortice in them, through which a short piece of timber runs transversely, whose ends rest on the beams beforementioned: when one of the stakes happens to be crooked, a piece is driven in between the adjoining stakes to fill up the cavity. Several short rows have been found in this bog, but the turf has been cut off one in particular, which has extended upwards of twenty perches in a straight line; the end of the horizontal beams being placed close to each other, this line does not cross the bog from hill to hill, but runs in an oblique and nearly a western direction down the bog from the rath beforementioned; more of this curiosity is stripping every year as the bog is cut over;† but the perpendicular stakes are not so long, as the bog is getting shallower the nearer it is cut to the edge. What the use of this curiosity was I do not pretend to be a good enough antiquary to ascertain; but would be obliged to any of your intelligent correspondents for their opinion on this subject. I.D.

To be Continued.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON FAIRIES.

"You've heard of such spirits."

HAVING, in a former Essay taken a short survey of witchcraft, I now proceed to make a few observations on a link of the same chain,

supposed to be used for the purpose of driving those pieces of timber and the stakes.

† A pavement of stones, near a perch square has been found a considerable time ago with some marks of ashes upon the same; and also a pair of Quernes which were formerly made use of for grinding corn.

namely the fairies. An eminent author has defined fairies to be, "a kind of fabled beings supposed to appear in a diminutive human form, and to dance in the meadows, and reward cleanliness in houses." This description does not appear to be a general one, and perhaps related only to English fairies, the author belonging to that country; for those of this country, are said to have had several peculiar qualities beside the before mentioned, viz. an insatiable desire for stealing young children, prior to christening, or even the mother, while she lay in child-bed; they are also represented as being very vindictive, often destroying the cattle of such persons as disturbed in any manner the ground on which they hold their gambols. Their usual places of resort are stated to have been the little green mounts, Danish raths, or near some large thorn; the persons who disturbed any of those places, we are told, were sure to have their cattle all elf-shot*, or perhaps struck themselves with some dreadful malady; those places are still held sacred, by most people, for fear of some terrible visitation, and is commonly distinguished by the name of "gentle ground." They did not however always come in a hostile manner, for I am informed they sometimes kept up a friendly intercourse with mankind, or rather with womankind, for I understand it was mostly with them they corresponded; but wo. wo. we are told, ever befell the person, or persons, who refused them whatsoever they wanted, which they were sure to repay many fold. Legends also inform us that green was the universal colour of their dress in this country, but this seems to have been only national, as Shakespear mentions black, gray, white, and green fairies. We are also told

* Cattle are usually said to be elf-shot that die suddenly, occasioned, it is said, by the fairies shooting them with sharp flint stones. I have been shown some of those stones, they are the heads of the antient Irish arrows, before the use of iron here; and wonderful to relate are in high repute as an effectual preservative against fairies, &c when hung in a cow house, or boiled in the drink of cattle.

of a gigantic species called Browney, and that if one was well fed, he would work hard all night in the barn, threshing as much as two common persons. I have even been informed of some being found dead in the barns through excessive labour! Browney seems to have been of Scottish descent, and to have been imported along with the Scottish colonists, as I find no mention of such a spirit amongst the antient Irish, whose superstition is chiefly confined to the Beanshee. In England he is known by the name of Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, and seems to be the same as Milton's Lubber Fiend—

“Whose shadowy flail hath thrash'd the corn

That ten day-labourers could not end,
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And stretch'd along the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength.”

That these were still considered fabled beings, by the learned, I have no manner of doubt, but at what period they are said to have first appeared amongst mankind is rather uncertain; probably about the same time as Satyrs, Harpies, and other fabulous beings, mostly created by the Poets, and introduced into their works of fancy. It seems therefore somewhat probable that credulous old women, &c. hearing of such things in the works of the learned, concluded they were real, and passed those wild opinions on infancy, for as the poet has said,

“A careful nurse, and priest, is all we need
To learn opinions and our country's creed.”

These opinions, which it may be said they sucked in with their milk, was no doubt heightened by the small books and pamphlets, put into their hands at an early period, such as the famous history of Tom Thumb, Fairy Tales, Tales of the Fairies, &c. and many others of equal celebrity. The clergy also seemed to have sanctioned such beliefs, as is still evident from certain clergy giving preservatives against fairies, &c. I shall conclude these remarks by a quotation from Roscommon, who says:

“—Whatsoever contradicts my sense,
“I hate—and never can believe.”

C. Fergus.

S.M.S.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

ON CLASSICAL STUDIES.

GENTLEMEN,

ALLOW me to announce my address to you by the words, “Ne quid nimis.” In the outset of your publication you very fairly stated your intentions, and to do you justice, you have in general adhered to them with consistency: but in one thing you now appear under a defect necessarily arising from your declaration. The part of your prospectus relative to essays on classical subjects I particularly allude to; in that you profess a wish to be furnished with such essays, while the language of your invitation contains a repent. The truth of my construction appears from the fact, that after the first few numbers of your miscellany, such subjects disappeared altogether from its pages. Allow me to say, that this was rather injudicious; persons who could discuss a classical subject may reasonably be considered as more probably qualified to contribute to your work than others, and, all things else being equal, deserved at least equal encouragement. We may consider too, that equal encouragement to *them* would not be exclusion to others; and that on the contrary, it would operate powerfully in exciting in this country a spirit of classical study, a particular too little attended to. There is an idea too prevalent here, and you have given it some sanction, that the knowledge of Latin and Greek is useless; and that the time expended in the acquisition of them is so much time thrown away. To this I would reply, that the observation implies an insufficiency in the objector to decide, as no one who has made a proficiency in the study, could possibly maintain the opinion. And how is the objection generally supported? By selecting some literary man, and laughing at his inexpertness in lotting up pounds, shillings, and pence. Supposing him in a situation, for which his education has never qualified him, and then imputing his deficiency to his education. Suppose the objector for once set down to a Greek, or